

**CALIFORNIA EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY**  
**COSCO BUSAN SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA OIL SPILL**  
**AFTER ACTION / CORRECTIVE ACTION REPORT**

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

In California, as part of the Standardized Emergency Management System (SEMS), statute requires the Governor's Office of Emergency Services (OES) to produce an After Action Report (AAR) within 120 days after each declared disaster indicating that, "This report shall review public safety response and disaster recovery activities." The supporting SEMS regulations require jurisdictions "declaring a local emergency for which the governor proclaims a state of emergency, and any state agency responding to that emergency, shall complete and transmit an after action report to OES within ninety (90) days of the close of the incident period." The close of the incident period for the Cosco Busan San Francisco Bay Area Oil Spill was October 31, 2008. The purpose of this reporting requirement is to capture response and recovery efforts, lessons learned, and corrective action recommendations before critical data is lost due to the passage of time. The information outlined in this report is based on feedback from State and local agencies involved in various areas of emergency management operations in response to this event, including emergency operation centers (EOC) and field operations.

Note: Effective January 1, 2009, OES and the Office of Homeland Security (OHS) were merged into a single agency called the California Emergency Management Agency (Cal EMA). However, since this incident occurred prior to the merger, this document will continue to reference OES.

**Executive Summary:**

The San Francisco Oil Spill which occurred on November 7, 2007, once again tested California's interagency coordination abilities with both federal and local partners. The United States Coast Guard (USCG) initially responded to the incident and assumed Incident Command. The USCG notified and requested assistance from the California Department of Fish and Game (DFG)/Office of Oil Spill Prevention Release (OSPR). DFG notified the California State Warning Center (CSWC) of the spill soon after the incident occurred. The CSWC then notified those state and local agencies that were identified as being impacted by the oil spill. As it became clear that a significant amount of oil was being released into San Francisco Bay, additional state and local agencies were notified of the oil spill and were included in the response efforts.

Successful operations were highlighted in the following areas: interagency cooperation among federal and state agencies included in the unified command, incorporating volunteers into the beach cleanup response, alerting and notification of local public health and environmental health, availability of technical expertise from multiple state agencies, and effective distribution of updated information related to clean-up and emergency response efforts. Local governments in the coastal region demonstrated their commitment to regional response through participating in Incident Command planning. Due to the success of the volunteer endeavor, OSPR has taken a lead role in expanding its convergent volunteer program to include opportunities outside of wildlife rehabilitation.

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Improvements are recommended in the following areas: Improved information sharing with local governments; coordination among state and local officials regarding beach closures and issues related to potential human exposure to oil and chemical contaminants; ensuring that the Incident Command includes representation of the lead state agency; additional staffing and training of state and local agencies to assist with response, training, and deploying volunteers; pre-identification of viable facilities for accommodating members of federal, state and local agencies reporting to the incident command posts (ICP); improving Regional Emergency Operational Center (REOC) facility conditions to accommodate a unified command post.

Corrective action has already been taken to resolve the following issue: The CSWC followed the oil spill notification procedures as required; however, due to the limited notification requirements, only the county identified as impacted by the oil spill was notified of the incident. Initially the incident was identified as having occurred in Alameda County therefore only Alameda County was notified of the oil spill. When it was discovered that the incident actually occurred within San Francisco County and that it was much larger than the original estimated spill volume, additional local governments were notified about the oil spill. During this time lapse the oil spill spread throughout the San Francisco Bay before the extent of the spill was identified. OES determined that the oil spill notification requirements were too narrowly defined and limited in nature. As a result, CSWC's oil spill notification requirements have been revised to ensure that all potentially impacted Operational Areas (OAs) are notified of the oil spill in a timely manner. This allows local jurisdictions to be more proactively involved in responding and mitigating the impact of this type of oil spill to protect the shoreline and animal life within their jurisdictions.

#### **Description of Event:**

At approximately 0830 hrs on Wednesday, November 7, 2007, a container ship, the M/V Cosco Busan, struck the fender surrounding a footing of the western span of the San Francisco Bay Bridge. The bridge was not damaged, but the ship sustained a breach in its hull causing a spill of medium grade fuel oil. Initial reports from the ship's crew put the discharge at about 10 barrels or 400 gallons. The USCG responded to the incident and based on the initial discharge estimate assessed the oil spill to pose minimal risk to the surrounding San Francisco Bay. The USCG immediately notified and requested assistance from DFG's OSPR staff to assess and respond to the situation. Late in the afternoon after a closer inspection and assessment of the damaged area and holding tanks, OSPR determined that approximately 1375 barrels or 58,000 gallons of fuel oil had actually been discharged into the San Francisco Bay. A unified command was established at Fort Mason to respond to the evolving incident. Seven counties, including San Francisco, Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, San Mateo, Solano and Sonoma, were impacted by the oil spill.

On Saturday morning, November 10, the ICP was moved to Treasure Island to accommodate the number of state and federal staff comprising the unified command. OES' Coastal Region emergency operations staff reported to the ICP that morning to begin more effective coordination of state and local resources and sharing of information. DFG as the lead state agency for

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responding to a marine oil spill hired a contractor, The O'Brian Group, to be the Responsible Party (RP) and to assume the position of Incident Commander and as such assume management of the oil spill operations. Communication between the Incident Command Post (ICP) and the local Operational Area (OA) representatives was very poor until OES' Coastal Region staff was assigned to be the liaison between the OAs and ICP. In order to improve the communication capability at the new ICP site, OES' Telecommunication Section staff set-up the Operational Area Satellite Information System (OASIS) trailers on Treasure Island and ran cabling to create a wireless internet network for use by the OAs and OES staff assigned to the ICP.

This incident galvanized an overwhelming public response throughout the Bay Area, but the desire to volunteer for beach cleanup activities was particularly strong in San Francisco. The DFG and the City and County of San Francisco (CCSF) held informational sessions for volunteers that explained allowed activities. As a result of the large number of convergent volunteers who were interested in cleaning oiled beaches, for the first time, OSPR agreed to provide beach cleanup training to volunteers. OSPR staff developed and provided a four-hour Hazwoper "Disaster Service Worker Volunteer Certificate" course which was offered to 1500 volunteers. This abbreviated training allowed volunteers under the guidance of local government or volunteer centers to safely participate in beach cleanup activities. These volunteers were then deployed throughout the duration of the response. CaliforniaVolunteers coordinated with local volunteer centers to incorporate convergent volunteers into the available cleanup activities, beach cleanup and oiled rescued wildlife cleanup.

The DFG developed Shoreline Cleanup and Assessment Technique (SCAT) teams to oversee beach and shoreline cleanup. The 226 identified impacted shoreline sites were prioritized based on spill specifics such as the location of the release, the nature of the release, volume of the release and other established criteria. SCAT activities were jointly coordinated by the Incident Commander (contractor), OSPR Environmental Scientists and USCG representatives.

DFG also established a workforce to manage Wildlife Operations to deal with the oil impacted wildlife as well as Environmental Units (EUs). The EUs ensured the protections of environmental and historical/cultural resources that were at risk from the released oil as well as from response-related activities.

The California Environmental Protections Agency's (Cal/EPA's) Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA) was responsible for protecting the public from the adverse affects of the oil spill on marine life, such as the safety of public consumption of fish, crab and shellfish. OEHHA staff also assessed beach safety and many beaches were closed to the public until SCAT determined what cleanup activities would allow safe re-entry in the affected areas (beaches).

During the recovery timeframe, DFG, OSPR and OEHHA conducted ongoing sampling and analysis of mussels, archived fish and shellfish. When analysis showed oil-related contamination to fall within acceptable limits, the fish advisory was rescinded. In addition, SCAT shoreline and bay cleaning continued as needed until it was determined that SCAT oversight was no longer needed. The incident period was officially closed on October 31, 2008.

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**Statistical Summary:**

Dates of Operations covered by this report: November 7, 2007 through October 31, 2008  
Counties Involved: San Francisco, Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, San Mateo, Solano and Sonoma  
Total Fuel Oil Discharged into SF Bay: 58,000 gallons  
Injuries: 0 reported  
Fowl Affected: Approximately 2,225  
Oil Collected: Approximately 19,466 gallons  
Oil Evaporated: Approximately 4,060 gallons

**Proclamation and Declarations:**

Local Proclamations: Alameda County, Contra Costa County, Marin County, City and County of San Francisco, San Mateo County, Solano County, Sonoma County, City of Albany, City of Berkeley, City of Oakland, and the East Bay Regional Park District due to impact of the oil spill on the local shoreline.  
Governor's Proclamation: Issued November 9, 2007 for the City and County of San Francisco, Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, San Mateo, Solano, and Sonoma counties due to fuel oil spill.  
Presidential Declarations: None

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**ORGANIZATIONS CONTRIBUTING TO THIS REPORT**

State Agencies and Departments:

California Coastal Commission  
California Conservation Corps  
California Department of Boating and Waterways  
California Department of Fish and Game/Office of Oil Spill Prevention and Response  
California Department of Parks and Recreation  
California Department of Public Health  
California Department of Transportation  
California Environmental Protection Agency/Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment  
California Water Board, San Francisco Bay Region  
California Volunteers  
Governor's Office of Emergency Services  
Regional Water Quality Control Boards  
San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission

Local Government/Operational Areas:

City and County of San Francisco  
Contra Costa County  
Mendocino County (not declared, but a representative reported to the ICP as a precaution)  
San Mateo County  
Solano County  
Sonoma County